

DISTINCTION ACTS 6.8

Who Stephen is internally and externally

INTERNAL

1. Hellenist

- Name and office
- Chosen among thousands as one of seven
- Transition – First preacher not an apostle
- Signs and wonders – only by apostles
- Opposition – Hellenistic synagogues
 - Libertines (W. Libya, near Carthage)
 - Cyrene (E. Libya, near Egypt)
 - Alexandrians (Egypt)
 - Cilicia (SE Turkey)
 - Asia (W. Turkey – 7 churches of Rev.)

2. Filled

- Holy Ghost (v. 3)
- Wisdom (v. 3)
- Faith (v. 5, 8)
- Power (v. 8)
- Holy Spirit
 - Galatians 5.22
 - Able to lead as well as follow (v. 1-6)

- Made his wisdom irresistible (v. 10)
- Ability to speak boldly in the face of persecution (7. 2-53)
- Ability to see the glory of God, in face of death (v. 55)
- Forgiveness (v. 60)

➤ Wisdom

- Mental excellence
- Skilled in management of affairs of men
- “Devout and proper prudence in intercourse with men (who are) not disciples of Christ, skill and discretion in imparting Christian truth”

➤ Faith

- More accurately – Grace
- Faithful in little, entrusted with more
- Means he believed that the things God said are true
- Recognized things that cannot be seen and acted on them
- There is a heaven and a hell
- All are sinners – by birth nature destined for eternity separated from God
- There is a Savior who made a way of salvation and reconciles men to God and God to men
- Hearing the call to works and allowing the Spirit to perform His works in our lives on behalf of the church and others and the glory of God.
- Filled with Holy Spirit, with grace and faith, and therefore...

➤ Power

- Appointed by men to position of service
- Appointed by God to position of power
- Not a super man
- An ordinary man made extraordinary by the power of the Holy Spirit
- Fulfillment of Acts 1.8

3. Reference to grace and power links Stephen...

- To Jesus
 - Disciple of the Apostles who were disciples of Jesus
 - Luke 6.40 A disciple (learner) when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.
- To Apostles
 - Acts. 4.33 And with great **power** gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great **grace** was upon them all.
- To Paul
 - Eph. 3:7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's **grace** given me through the working of his **power**. (NIV)
 - 2 Cor 12:9 (The Lord) said unto me, My **grace** is sufficient for you: for my **power** is made perfect in weakness. (ESV)

4. Results of being filled

- No room left for self, no call for the rights of self will
- Completely committed to self sacrifice and surrender.
- Christ-like character results in courageous witness

1 Pet. 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's **grace** in its various forms. 11 ...If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength (**power**) God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

EXTERNAL

5. Filled with Spirit, grace and power...

- Overflows into the lives of others

John 4:14 Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

John 7:38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, "Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

- For Stephen...

...Natural outward expression of wonders and miracles.

6. Once again, connects to...

- Jesus (Acts 2.22)
- Apostles (Acts 2.43)

7. What Stephen did

7.1 "...did..." – "was performing"

- Consistent and continual
- Calling of God
- No indication he did not work anywhere else

7.2 Luke qualified – "great" – *megas*

- Affecting the mind & emotions
- Exciting admiration

7.3 Wonders

- Not two kinds of miracles, but different aspects of the same miracle
- Calls attention to the visible aspect of the miracle
- Startling, imposing, amazing
- Will never be forgotten

7.4 Miracles (signs)

- Unusual occurrences transcending the common course of nature
- Bore “finger-prints of God”
- Made visible the grace and power of God at work in His messenger
- Authenticates His authority and the person’s ministry

8. Where Stephen did it

Among the people

- Miracles – message theme continues
- Acts 1.1 all that Jesus began go to do and to teach
- Pattern w/ Peter’s sermons
- What do we do in our culture that is so significant it validates and authenticates our message?
- Not a call to a prescription – effort does not equal effectiveness
- A promise of God’s gifts.